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EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION

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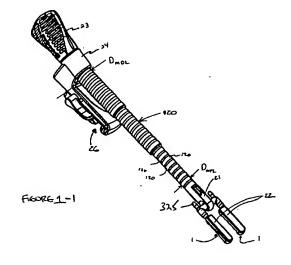
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(54) Apparatus for temporarily immobilizing a local area of tissue

(57) The invention is apparatus for performing beating heart surgery, in which a single articulating arm supports multiple suction pods. Once the suction pods are applied to the heart surface, tightening a cable fixes the arm in place. Then, the suction pods may be spread apart from each other to tighten the surface of the cardiac tissue lying between the suction pods. In one embodiment, fixation of the arm as well as the spreading apart of the suction pods may occur concurrently or almost concurrently through the tensioning of a single cable. Additional embodiments of the method, system and its components are shown.





EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number EP 99 30 7331

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	Place of search	Date of completion of the search		Examiner	
	THE HAGUE	26 April 2000	1 _	ton, S	
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	ological background written disclosure		e same patent family		

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Application Number

EP 99 30 7331

CLAIMS INCURRING FEES
The present European patent application comprised at the time of filling more than ten claims.
Only part of the claims have been paid within the prescribed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for the first ten claims and for those claims for which claims fees have been paid, namely claim(s):
No claims fees have been paid within the prescribed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for the first ten claims.
LACK OF UNITY OF INVENTION
The Search Division considers that the present European patent application does not comply with the requirements of unity of invention and relates to several inventions or groups of inventions, namely:
[24] [1] [1] [1] [2] [2] [2] [2] [2] [2] [2] [2] [2] [2
see sheet B
All further search fees have been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for all claims.
As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, the Search Division did not invite payment of any additional fee.
Only part of the further search fees have been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for those parts of the European patent application which relate to the Inventions In respect of which search fees have been paid, namely claims:
None of the further search fees have been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for those parts of the European patent application which relate to the invention first mentioned in the claims, namely claims:



EPO FORM 1503 03,82 (PO4C01)

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LACK OF UNITY OF INVENTION SHEET B

Application Number EP 99 30 7331

The Search Division considers that the present European patent application does not comply with the requirements of unity of invention and relates to several inventions or groups of inventions, namely:

1. Claims: 1-11, 18-21, 45, 46, 78, 79, 82-88, 110, 114-118

Tissue immobilising system with movable paddles, in particular with a combination of malleable conforming and suction gripping

2. Claims: 1,22-25

Tissue immobilising system with movable paddles, with spreading means including a spreadable saddle

3. Claims: 1,29,31-38

Tissue immobilising system with movable paddles, with independent spreading of first and second paddles

4. Claims: 1,14-17,39-44,47-52

Tissue immobilising system with movable paddles, with hinged spreading means

5. Claims: 1,53-56,81

Tissue immobilising system with movable paddles, with simultaneous paddle spreading and arm locking

6. Claims: 1,12,20,30,57,58

Tissue immobilising system with movable paddles, with parallel paddle spreading

7. Claims: 1,13,59-62

Tissue immobilising system with movable paddles, with non-parallel paddle spreading

8. Claims: 1,63-77

Tissue immobilising system with movable paddles, with multiple suction ports on a single surface

9. Claims: 1,80

Tissue immobilising system with movable paddles, with



EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Humber

Category	Citation of the county in	DERED TO BE RELEVANT indication, where appropriate, ssages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (IntCL7)		
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LACK OF UNITY OF INVENTION SHEET B

Application Number

EP 99 30 7331

The Search Division considers that the present European patent application does not comply with the requirements of unity of invention and relates to several inventions or groups of inventions, namely:

special arrangement of suction source, suction port and paddle and port surfaces

10. Claims: 1,89-93,99-103

Tissue immobilising system with movable paddles, with special construction of flexible $\mbox{\sc arm}$

11. Claims: 1,26-28,94-98,110-113,119-126

Tissue immobilising system with movable paddles, with spreading actuator remote from paddles

12. Claims: 1,104-109

Tissue immobilising system with movable paddles, with paddle with puncturing and dispensing capability $% \left(\frac{1}{2}\right) =\frac{1}{2}\left(\frac{1}{2}\right) +\frac{1}{2}\left(\frac{1}$

ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.

EP 99 30 7331

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